

It's Smart To Be Gallery Wise/

THE WILLIAM ROCKHILL NELSON GALLERY OF ART

AND ATKINS MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

NEWS FLASHES

January 1,

1937

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EXHIBITION OF SCULPTURES BY BORIS LOVET-LORSKI: Beginning Sunday, January 3rd and continuing for that month, the central loan gallery at the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery and Atkins Museum will be installed with a group of sculptures by the American artist, Boris Lovet-Lorski. Famed for his sensitive handling of rare and precious marbles, this will be Lovet-Lorski's first major showing in the Middle West. The exhibition will be a particularly comprehensive one and will include not only works from his earlier periods, but also a group of more spectacular compositions which have just been completed and which were shown for the first time in New York this fall. The exhibition will continue through the month of January.

Born in Russia in 1891, Boris Lovet-Lorski is a product of the more cosmopolitan wave which spread over that country at the beginning of the twentieth century and which unfortunately was diverted by the World War. While still young he was attracted to all forms of art and was interested in music, drawing, the theatre, and in collecting. He studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg and trained for architecture. It was here no doubt that he found the basis of his harmonious sense of proportion and symmetry. There was little need in Russia for an architect after the war, and Lovet-Lorski turned to the craft of the carver. In the words of his biographer, Benari, "In sculpture he finally found an outlet for his sense of rhythm, proportion and harmony of masses in space, as well as for his aspiration to give form to ideas born in the depth of his spirit".

America called him as early as 1920, and he later became a citizen of that country. Here it was that he found himself and that he has had his most significant development. His work may be divided into three periods, the first marked by a more elaborate and decorative quality and the second by an individual archaism. Here the forms have a tenseness and a hidden force, and the motions and muscles may be exaggerated. This second phase led up to his third period in which we see, in addition to his earlier style, a new note of classicism. Again to quote his biographer, "- it is classicism in the Greek sense of the word. By Classicism I mean not naturalism, but stylization of the human body carried to such a degree of perfection it creates real life, more real than the life we actually live."

From the first, Lovet-Lorski has explored with brilliant success the media in which sculpture can be produced and has always used them with the utmost regard for the limitations which they impose in themselves. His achievements in colour, surface and texture are unbelievable and no stone is too hard or too rare to appeal to his taste and to yield to his chisel. Added to the sheer perfection of his forms and their modeling, then, is the beauty of the material in which they are worked. Only a suggestion of the range can be given here, but it includes jade, bronze, brass, copper, Swedish marble, Rose of Milan and of Madagascar, black marble from Belgium, Egyptian granite, Mexican Onyx, and rarest of all, blue Carrara marble. In spite of these exotic stones, the sculptor has never lost sight of his original impulse. His figures emerge from the material, maintain their connection with it and exist plastically as well as actually.

A very signal honor has just been paid the artist in the announcement that he has been selected to represent the modern school of American sculptors in the United States Pavillion at the Paris International Exhibition of next year. Hard upon this tribute comes the news that the French Ministry of Fine Arts has just bought his "Head of an Unknown God" for the Jeu de Paume Museum. This is the second of his works to find a permanent place in Paris, as his bronze "Venus" has also been purchased for the collection of the Petit Palais.

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It is hoped that Mr. Lovet-Lorski will be present in Kansas City at the opening to meet his many friends and that perhaps we may have the pleasure of hearing him explain his works and the precious materials of which they are made at one of the Wednesday Evening lectures.

KARL SCHMIDT-ROTLUFF: Opening also on Sunday, January third, an important group of paintings and watercolours by the German artist, Schmidt-Rotluff, which has just come from a successful showing at the Detroit Institute of Art, will be exhibited in the north and south loan galleries.

Born near Chemnitz in 1884, the artist was one of the founders of the Brücke group. As early as 1907 he admired the work of Van Gogh and became one of the most consistent and most powerful painters of the German expressionists. Using a strong and dominant palette, he is greatly influenced by early stained glass and 15th century woodcuts. Schmidt-Rotluff is represented in all the important German museums and at Detroit, and was included in the Museum of Modern Art exhibition of 1931.

Dr. Valentiner, of the Detroit Institute of Art, sums up the work of the artist in his monograph, "And as with all great works of art, content and form appear in most perfect harmony with greatest simplicity of construction".

Coming soon after the exhibition of Van Gogh, it will be interesting to compare these powerful and often violent paintings with the work of the great Dutchman. The exhibition will continue through the month of January.

MASTERPIECE OF THE MONTH: For the month of January, our superb portrait of "Old Parr" by Peter Paul Rubens will be featured. Recently cleaned of its yellowed varnish, the painting has returned from the restorer in very much the same condition that it left the easel of the artist. It is certainly one of the most popular portraits in the Gallery collection and has been greatly missed while it was away. From a point of view of interest, it surpasses all others, and everyone knows of the story of Old Parr who was supposed to have lived to be 153 and who might have lived forever if he had not gone up to London to be feasted and dined on rich and unaccustomed food by King Charles I. Parr is buried in the south transept of Westminster Abbey and his gravestone, set in the flagging of the floor, can still be deciphered. His fame lives on, and in England today, we find pills for a long life bearing his name!

WEDNESDAY EVENING LECTURES: The lectures for Wednesday evenings will be resumed on January 6th, and at that time Mr. Gardner will talk on the special loan exhibitions of the sculpture of Lovet-Lorski and the paintings of Schmidt-Rotluff.

On the evening of January 13th, the lecture, which will be given by Mr. Gardner, will be devoted to the artist Rubens and especially to his portrait of Old Parr. Fortunately, there are contemporary documents on this modern Methuselah and through the courtesy of Dr. Logan Clendening, the Gallery files have a copy of "The Old, Old, Very Old Man or the Age and Long Life of Thomas Parr" written by John Taylor, the "Water Poet", and published in London in 1635, the year that Old Parr died. It is most amusing and informative. Interesting comparisons of other works by Rubens studied this fall by the Director in Germany and Austria will be made. From the point of view of world-wide knowledge, this portrait is one of the most famous in the collection.

Another lecture in the series of decorative arts will be given on Wednesday Evening, January 20th, when Mr. Gardner will discuss the Renaissance in France and England. This very important style, which marked the beginning of the modern era, was avidly adopted by both France and England and both countries translated it into a very national expression. It is the time of those fascinating monarchs, Francis I and Henry VIII, and in every way is one of the most interesting periods.

The following Wednesday Evening Miss Jackson will give the next of the series on the decorative arts when she will discuss

Early Renaissance Textiles, from the beginning of patterned silk weavings through the Renaissance. It is not possible to give a date for the beginning of the silk industry in China, but we do know that it was not introduced into the Western world until the 6th century, when two monks smuggled the silk worms into Constantinople hidden in a hollow bamboo pole. For centuries it was a Mohamedan monopoly until it was introduced into Sicily in the 12th century. From there it spread to the mainland of Italy where it not only developed, but was instrumental in creating the greatness of Florence of the Renaissance period, when that city was known all over Europe for the beauties of her rich brocades and the sumptuous velvets which originated there.

PRINTS: The very comprehensive group of Felix Buhot prints, sponsored by the Print Club and now on exhibition in Galleries XV and XVI, will remain on view until the middle of January. It is the most complete exhibition of the work of the artist ever held in this country, and as some of his most important plates are shown in several states, it is creating great interest. Some visitors are finding the "remarques" or little notes on the margins as fascinating as the prints themselves.

Beginning January 15th and continuing for a month, the Print Club will sponsor an exhibition of the work of Robert Sargent Austin, the outstanding contemporary English etcher and engraver. Writing of him, Campbell Dogson says, "Mr. Austin is an engraver of remarkable taste, talent, and industry, who has never courted popularity or abandoned his independence, enterprise and personal judgment. He has proved his ability to break out in new and unexpected directions and it may be anticipated that his active brain and dexterous hand will not for a long time tire of extracting new beauties from the copper-plate".

It is with great pleasure that the Gallery welcomes "The Print Collectors' Quarterly" to its new headquarters in Kansas City. It is indicative of the important place that our city is taking in the print world and it is inevitable that it will create a greater interest in our fine permanent collection of prints.

FRIENDS OF ART: The morning meetings of the Friends of Art to discuss phases of Modern Art have been changed from Fridays to Wednesdays, as the former seems a freer day.

On Wednesday morning, January 6th, at 11:00 A.M., Mr. Gardner will discuss Surrealism, and two weeks later, on January 20th, will talk on Neo-Romanticism in Modern Painting. These meetings are held in the Library and all Friends of Art are cordially invited.

PRINT CLUB: The next meeting of the Print Club will be held on Monday Evening at 8:00 P.M., January 11th, in the Atkins Auditorium. At that time Mr. Wittmann will talk on the etchings and engravings of the English printmaker, Robert Austin, whose work will be shown in the Print Galleries for a month beginning January 15th.

GIFTS: A fine example of later French Impressionist Painting, "Corneille Bridge, Rouen" by Gustave Loiseau, has been presented to the permanent collection by Durand-Ruel, Inc. Carrying on the tradition of Monet, it is exquisite in colour and will be a most welcome addition to Gallery XII.

Mrs. Lucy Drage has presented in memory of her daughter, Elizabeth Drage Harvey, two necklaces, one of Mexican amber and one set with mosaics, and a painted fan with mother-of-pearl sticks.

Mrs. Bertha E. Glasner has presented a rare and finely woven Indian Shawl which was given to one of her ladies-in-waiting by Queen Victoria. The classical section has been presented with a delicately carved Egyptian miniature portrait head by Monsieur Paul Mallon of Paris.

LOANS: The great importance of the permanent collection is shown in the many requests that come from other museums for loans. At present the Bosch Temptation of St. Anthony is lent to the Museum of Modern Art for its Surrealist Exhibition. A group of Dürer prints was sent to the Dallas Museum for a special exhibition and lecture on that artist. In February the Guardi Entrance to the Grand Canal will be lent to the Springfield, Massachusetts, Museum for an important showing of that master's work and a large group of European and Oriental bronzes will go to Buffalo for their annual loan exhibition. A series of small Buddhist Bronzes has just returned from the Pennsylvania Museum.

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ILLUSTRATIONS OF COLLECTION: August Mayer, the great expert on Spanish Art, has just published a new work on Velazquez, the most comprehensive to date. In it, both our "Head of Bacchus" and "St. Peter" are illustrated and listed as outstanding examples of the artist's early period.

Dr. W. R. Valentiner, Director of the Detroit Museum, is the author of a new volume on Frans Hals which has just appeared. In it our Portrait of a Man is given a full page illustration and it is noted that it is one of the finest of his late black and white period.

STAFF ACTIVITIES: In December, the Director lectured in Pittsburg, Kansas, on "The Artist Sees Differently" and in Neosho, Missouri, on "The Place Our Gallery has Assumed among the Museums of the World".

In January, the Director will go to Dallas, Texas, to act on the jury for their annual exhibition of Texas Artists.

SUNDAY AFTERNOON MUSIC: The musical program presented each month by the members of Tau Chapter of Sigma Alpha Iota will be given on January 17th at three-thirty in the Atkins Auditorium. These concerts are proving most popular with Gallery visitors and add a great deal to the enjoyment of a Sunday afternoon in the Museum.

CHILDRENS' ACTIVITIES: The Saturday morning classes will be resumed on January 9th after a two week vacation, as will the "Drawing for Fun" group in the afternoon.

William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art
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